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REPORT

OF

THE WORKING GENERAL SECRETARY

4277

NOTE

This report is prepared in terms of Article XIV (c) of the Indian National Congress for submition to the A. I. C. C.

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SWARAJ BHAWAN, ALLAHABAD.

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INTRODUCTION

After a strenuous and heroic struggle carried on for nearly two years and a half under the most adverse circumstances and against odds the Civil Disobedience Movement was suspended by a resolution of the A.I.C.C. passed at its meeting of the 18th and 19th May, 1934, held at Patna. This meeting also decided that the next session of the Congress be held in Bombay in October 1934. The Working Committee at Patna passed a resolution calling upon Congressmen to "reorganise all Congress committees for carrying on the normal activities of the Congress". Another resolution called upon "all Congress organisations to enrol members and complete elections to the various committees before August 31, 1934". The Working Committee in this connection appointed prominent Congressmen with full powers in different provinces for the work of the reorganisation of the Congress committees. The procedure for the election of the President for the ensuing Congress session was also laid down.

The Government partially responded to the suspension of C. D. by removing the ban upon most of the Congress organisations. Congressmen all over took up the work of reorganisation in right earnest. Lest this suspension be construed, as it was being done in quarters hostile to the Congress, into watering down of the national goal of the Poorna Swaraj, the Working Committee at its meeting held at

Wardha September 9th-11th reiterated and emphasised this goal of complete independence and to clear all doubts in the future, declared that any Congressman and Congress organisation trying to water down this goal would be "liable to the charge of indiscipline" and that "Poorna Swaraj includes unfettered national control among other things, over the army and the other defence forces, external affairs, fiscal and commercial matters, financial and economic policy. It further declared that "A free India should have the freedom to make its choice between voluntary partnership with the British and complete separation"; and further that "while the Congress will not repudiate just obligations, it must adhere to the resolution to have an impartial scrutiny of the obligations to be undertaken by free India". The Working Committee in the course of this resolution also declared that "the Congress is nothing if it does not progressively represent and serve the masses. Such service is impossible without following the constructive programme of the Congress with meticulous care and devotion".

The 48th session of the Congress was held from the 26th to the 28th October 1934 under the presidentship of Babu Rajendra Prasad who was unanimously elected to preside in accordance with the procedure laid down at Patna. The session was momentous. The attendance was a record one. The most important matters that engaged the attention of the delegates were (1) the retirement of Gandhiji from the political activities of the Congress; (2) the endorsement of resolutions of the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee between the suspension of the

C. D. and the assembling of the session; (3) the new constitution foreshadowed by Gandhiji earlier; (4) the formation of the A.I.V.I.A.

The delegates as was evidenced by the speeches in the Subjects Committee were unwilling to reconcile themselves to the retirement of Gandhiji and much pressure was brought upon him. But he was firm in his resolve and perhaps rightly so. Though he was reluctantly allowed to retire it was known that his advice and guidance would always be available to those upon whose shoulders fell the burden of the Congress now. The country showed its confidence in him not only by a formal resolution but also by endorsing the policies he had suggested. As a matter of fact the Bombay Congress completely vindicated his leadership inspite of the temporary failure of the C. D. movement. It was felt that the odds against us were overwhelmingly great and the temporary setback was not due to any weakness or vacillation on the part of the author and the initiator of the movement but to other causes. The Bombay Congress also expressed the country's faith in Satyagraha as against methods of violence. The so-called constitutional action has ever since Gandhiji came to lead the Congress in 1920, been out of the picture inspite of the fact that whenever there has been no actual civil resistance Congressmen have entered the legislatures just to keep back the reactionary elements and thus prevent them from being used for antinational purposes.

The endorsement of old resolutions faced the Congress executive with opposition. One of the resolutions of the Working Committee passed on the

18th June 1934 had condemned "loose talk about confiscation of property and class war". This was resented, by the socialist group. They said that the condemnation had reference to them as a party. This was explained at a subsequent meeting at Benares and the Working Committee desired it to be known "that the resolution was not intended to criticise any party or its programme but was intended against irdividuals engaged in lose talk referred to in the resolution". This assurance not having satisfied the socialist friends they moved an amendment but it was defeated by an overwhelming majority in the open session. Malaviyaji's amendment to the so-called "Communal Award" clause of the resolution on the White Paper fared the same fate.

In the matter of the new constitution and the A.I.V.I.A. too Gandhiji's ideas were accepted by his countrymen almost in their entirety. We will have occasion to write about the new constitution and the A.I.V.I.A. in detail later. Here it is only necessary to mention that Gandhiji's idea about making the Congress more a compact working organisation than a demonstrative political body whose demonstrative side often overshadowed effective political work, was accepted. So also his call, "back to the villages," not in a sentimental but in a practical sense stirred a cord in the hearts of the delegates assembled.

The Congress over, the President Babu Rajendra Prasad nominated his colleagues of the Working Committee in terms of the new constitution. In the old constitution the Working Committee was elected by the vote of the A. I. C. C., though practically the

convention had grown of the A. I. C. C. accepting the names suggested by the President. This in the constitution was given a statutory basis. There was also a convention about the unity of the cabinet and united action and responsibility. This convention was followed by Babu Rajendra Prasad in nominating the new Working Committee.

The session over, the country began organising itself in terms of the new constitution. Its salient features were:—

1. The limitation of the number of delegates and the members of the A. I. C. C.

2. Representation in proportion to the enrolment of primary members.

3. Six months continuity on the electoral register for the exercise of franchise.

4. Division between rural and urban representation.

5. The manual labour clause.

6. Khadi clause.

7. The method of proportional representation by single transferable vote.

8. The simple and more direct method of presidential election.

Enrolment of Primary Members

The maximum number of delegates for the whole of India was fixed to 2000 in place of 6000i n the old constitution. This diminished number was not to be reached automatically. It depended upon the enrolment of primary members. 500 primary members were entitled to elect one delegate. This meant that at least 10,00,000 primary members were to be enrolled in the whole of India if the maximum of 2000 delegates was to be reached. These primary members were to be on the electoral register for 6 months previous to the date fixed for the election of delegates. In ordinary years the 6 months clause would leave about four to five months for enrolment

of primary members. This year the enrolment went on for about 8 months as the last congress had its session about 4 months earlier. The Congress has not a continuous roll of primary members. It changes from year to year specially in the rural areas on account of the membership fee of four annas. It varies also with the tempo of the political movement. It may not be possible in ordinary times to enrol the maximum number of primary members in the short time available. When the last date entitling members to exercise their franchise is past there is little incentive either for enrolling or becoming a member.

The delimitation of constituencies in many provinces proved a hard task owing to the small number of primary members enrolled in several areas. Sometimes there was a residue of members left over from a constituency which was to be utilized. Thus voters in urban as well as rural areas residing in distant places were combined together to form a single constituency. This made the task of conducting elections complicated and elaborate. It was everywhere felt that the boundaries of different constituencies should be fixed for a number of years. There may be periodical revision. It has also been suggested that the roll of Congress members should be more or less fixed and that a voter may renew his membership by the payment of the fee without filling in fresh forms.

The Congress membership lasts from one Congress session to another. The office bearers and the members of different committees are elected before the the annual session and hold office for the succeeding year. Some provision is necessary to ensure their

continued membership beyond the session. A month's time after the end of the annual session may be granted to them to renew their membership by the payment of the fee failing which they may be considered to have vacated their office or their membership of a committee.

Rural and Urban Representation

The division between rural and urban representation was designed to make the Congress progressively representative of the masses. It obliged the Congress workers not only to go to the villages but also to seek the villagers' vote. This was all for the good; but in the some places where the requisite rural number of primary members could not be enrolled, it worked to further diminish the number of delegates returnable by a province.

Manual Labour Clause

The Manual Labour Clause applied only to those who stood as candidates for office or for membership of an elected Congress Committee. It was introduced as a test of the Congress workers' identity with the manual workers. Gandhiji had proposed a uniform simple test of the spinning wheel. But as a section of Congressmen did not want manual labour to be confined only to the spinning wheel, a variety of form was introduced on the recommendation of the various provinces. This produced a little confusion specially when the manual labour to be done was for a Congress organisation or for such other philanthropic or public institutions as the P. C. Cs might approve. Many of the P. C. Cs failed to keep a separate register of those who intended to perform the prescribed manual labour. Various facilities were

given by the Working Committee and the President. Manual labour for all the six months could be consolidated and performed at any time during the period. The President made a special concession by extending the date to 24 hours before the time of the election of the delegates. The clause was however unpopular from the beginning. As a matter of fact Gandhiji seeing the atmosphere in Bombay had not insisted on it. But some of the leaders lent it their advocacy and support and it was passed. There is nothing wrong about the principle but the country has not accepted it, as a crucial test of the identification with the masses. Because of this unpopularity and the consequent indifference sufficient members entitled to be on the different excutive and Congress committees have not been available in many places. The clause also made no exception in favour of the old or the physically incapable. Near about the time of the election of delegates, it was found that some of our tried workers were incapable of qualifying themselves in terms of this clause either owing to continued ill health or advancing age. Exemption was granted by the Working Committee making a general rule covering all such cases. The 6 months previous enrolment clause was also modified in favour of those who were in jail or interned or externed or forcibly kept out of the country.

Khadi

The Khadi clause confined as it was to office holders and members of Congress committees worked quite satisfactory. It gained in popularity owing to its restricted application with the result that many of those who advocate big industry, would not today

wish to change this simple uniform of the Congress. The uniform has been adopted by Congressmen in the Assembly and they not only wear khadi but attend the Assembly meetings wearing a uniform white cap popularly known the Gandhi cap. This is impressive and distinguishes them from other groups.

A. I. C. C.

The limitation in the number of the members of the A. I. C. C. has been a distinct loss. The maximum strength according to the constitution is 166 that is one twelfth of the number of delegates. Less than half of this number only could be returned this year as the enrolment of primary members did not exceed half the maximum figure, and there was consequently automatic reduction in the number of delegates and therefore also the members of the A.I.C.C. The total number of primary members enrolled in the whole of India excepting Bengal and N. W. F. is about 4,13,230. The total number of delegates elected, excluding Bengal is 769. The total number of members of the A. I. C. C. excluding Bengal is 66. This figure for the A. I. C. C. the unofficial parliament of India is too meagre. It cannot possibly adequately represent all talent, all interests and all provinces. Some of the minor provinces, minor from the point of view of members and area, but very well organised and giving more than their quota of service and sacrifice have only one member on the A. I. C. C. Some of our best workers do not find a place in our councils. The nation can ill-afford to lose their advice and guidance. The representation on the A. I. C. C. on population basis needs a change in

favour of the smaller provinces. Some weightage may be given to them.

The Working Committee

The President of the year according to the constitution selects his colleagues of the cabinet from among the members of the A. I. C. C. The membership of this Committee has been reduced. In practice the membership will be still more restricted. The President may find important and useful men outside this number. His choice therefore must not be restricted but a provision should be made that whoever is selected to the Working Committee should find a seat on the A. I. C. C. within say two months of his selection as a member of the Working Committe.

Single Trnsferable Vote

This was a feature of the old constitution. But in the present constitution it was made more rigid. In many provinces it resulted in the creation of artificial divisions, parties and coteries, simply for the purpose of voting. In several provinces those who stood outside artificially created groups failed to get elected.

Election of the President

This was made more simple, direct and apparently more democratic. But in certain contingencies it may not work well. If there is concentration of attention on a single candidate some stray candidate having no general support may easily get the next best votes, though the difference between the successful candidate and the second may be overwhelmingly great. If for any reason, the selected candidate failed to preside, the choice would fall on one for whom the nation as a whole had never voted. The percent-

age of total votes secured by such a candidate may also be very low. Again if a number of candidates are proposed in different provinces we may have a president who may have secured not the majority of votes cast but only a small minority of the whole voting strength. Some times even 20 or less percentage of votes cast in favour of a candidate may push him through. The democratic character of this clause under these peculiar circumstances would be more apparent than real.

Interpretations and Explanations

The new constitution like every other constitution is brief. It has the marks of hurry on it. There were details to be provided for, gaps to be filled in and authoritative interpretations to be given. Points for elucidation and interpretation ever arose and some of these cropped up at every meeting of the Working Committee. The Working Committee made free use of its powers, to make provision during the transitory period for the smooth working of the constitution. Every difficulty as it arose, was speedily solved and on the whole considering that it was a new and untried constitution it worked smoothly and fairly well. The pressure of work on the office of course increased.

The Working Committee also made some simple but effective disciplinary rules. The Congress has no coercive power. Its decisions can only be respected if its members willingly undergo its discipline and discharge their duties. Yet some rules were necessary to make refractory and unconstitutional conduct difficult. The voluntary discipline maintained by the workers of the Congress however

was so great that these disciplinary rules were rarely used. The most refractory parties bowed to the decision of the President and the Working Committee. The personality of the President and his patience and sweet reasonableness always smoothed rough corners and disarmed opposition.

The A. I. C. C. on the recommendation of the Working Committee also made some simple and convenient rules for the conduct of its business.

Time-table

The new constitution made the drawing up of a time-table for the enrolment of primary members, for giving necessary information about enrolment to the local and central offices and for the different elections, necessary. This time-table was made early in the year. Owing to unavoidable circumstances, the P. C. C's lack of the necessary staff, the lack of an exact understanding of the requirements of the constitution and other difficulties incidental to reorganisation the rigid enforcement of the time-table was made difficult. Last hour concessions had to be made. The fixing of the time-table however had a salutary effect upon the local committees. The central office never wearied of sending timely reminders, by letter and some times by wire drawing attention to the disqualifying clauses.

Provincial Quota

The general vigilance made it possible to get all the information and the returns more or less regularly. All the P. C. Cs except N. W. F., Utkal and Bengal paid their full contribution to the A. I. C. C. office. N. W. F. province failed because the ban on the congress organisation there was never removed and

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unfortunately still continues. Utkal could plead poverty though that did not save it from disqualification. Bengal paid a portion only and for the non-payment of the rest, the disorganisation of the P. C. C. in Bengal must be held responsible. On the whole the A. I. C. C. dues were more completely realised than in previous years.

The constitution requires that the Provincial quota to the central office be paid before the newly formed A. I. C. C. meets as Subjects Committee, that is, in the very beginning of the official year. This will be found to present a difficulty to the newly formed P. C. Cs. The subscription should be called for by the middle of the year and if by then it is not paid the penalty clause should be enforced.

The Working Committee at its meeting at Madras in October last appointed a sub-committee consisting of the President, Shri Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Shri Jairamdas and Shri J. B. Kripalani, to examine the new constitution in the light of the experience gained in its working and to report to the Working Committee thereon. Their report is ready and will be placed before the Wg. C. at its meeting of the 7th April.

Primary Members, Delegates and A. I. C. C. Members 1935-36.

Serial No.	Name of Provinces	Number of Primary Members enrolled.	Number of delegates elected	No. of A. I. C. C. Members elected	Remarks
1	Ajmer	282	10	1	
2	Andhra	45103	81	7	
3	Assam	2620	10	1	
4	Bihar	78805	158	13	
5	Bengal (1)				
6	Berar	7058	13	1	
7	Bombay	17262	21	2	
8	Burma	669	10	1	
9	Delhi	8637	13	1	
10	Gujarat	24065	47	4	
11	Karnatak	21049	37	3	
12	Kerala	4062	10	1	
13	Mahakoshal	26044	45	4	
14	Maharashtra	28258	44	4	
15	Nagpur	8138	12	1	
16	N. W. F. (2)	...	21	2	
17	Punjab	12618	16	1	
18	Sind	4024	10	1	
19	Tamil Nad	55004	93	8	
2	U. P.	6[illegible]703	104	9	
21	Utkal	6829	14	1	
	TOTAL	4,13,230	769	66	

(1) The figures from Bengal are not complete yet. There were 32,186 primary members about whose enrolment there was no dispute. These would be entitled to elect 64 delegates and 5 members to the A. I. C. C. The number of primary members under dispute was 10,199.

(2) As the ban on the Congress organisations in the N. W. F. still exists there was no enrolment of primary members there. The President in terms of the constitution therefore nominated the delegates and the members of the A. I. C. C.

REPRESSION.

The suspension of civil disobedience did not bring any peace to the country. It took the Government three weeks to decide upon the withdrawal of notifications against Congress organisations. The provincial Governments took a few weeks more to lift the ban on organisations under their jurisdiction. That withdrawal was also only partial. Several organisations and institutions remained under ban till recently. Organisations like the Hindustani Seva Dal, the Khudai Khidmatgars and all Congress organisations in the North-West Frontier and in the district of Midnapur in Bengal, the Prem Mahavidyalya in U. P., and many institutions and ashrams in Gujarat are not permitted to function even today. There was no release of prisoners whether C. D. or any other. The detenus, the internees and the externees continued to be deprived of their liberty without any form of trial. The change of policy in the Congress failed to induce a corresponding change in Government policy of repression. On the contrary, the Government has repeatedly shown by its action that it preferred to coerce the people into submission by further curtailing their civil liberties rather than make an honourable peace with them. The enactment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act by the certification of the Viceroy as against the votes in the Assembly, the passing of similar acts in the provinces, the suppression of many Labour and Youth League organisations, the prosecution of important Congress and labour leaders under the wide powers of Section 124-A, may be cited as some of the many instances of Government aggression.

The Congress may have reverted to normal, peaceful activities, but the Government is still on the War-path.

Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and Dr. Satyapal

Soon after the Bombay Session Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, member of the Working Committee, and Dr. Satyapal, President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee were arrested and convicted on charges of sedition for terms of imprisonment of two years and one year respectively. Both of them made it clear during their trial that in accordance with the present policy of the Congress they had no intention to commit any breach of the Law, but this was not sufficient for a Government determined to crush all manifestations of political activity.

Prohibition of Ghandhiji's visit to Frontier

Gandhiji's effort to visit the Frontier province on a peaceful and philanthropic mission was defeated by the Government. In his letter asking for permission for this visit Gandhiji had made it perfectly clear that his object was to know the people of that province at first hand and to understand how far the teachings of non-violence by Khan Sahib Abdul Gaffar Khan had permeated the masses. But this had no effect and the visit was prohibited though there was no general prohibition against entry into the Frontier province.

Distress Warrants

It also pleased the Government from time to time to revive the memory of the civil disobedience movement by the issue of distress warrants for realisation of fines which had been imposed on Congress workers in 1932-33 in lieu of which they had already undergone imprisonment. Several such warrants were executed against Congress workers in

a number of provinces and properties belonging to their relations were attached and put to sale. It was only in the case of the President of the Burdwan district Congress Committee in Bengal that such vindictive action of the executive was condemned by a decision of the Calcutta High Court.

House searches—Campaign against Socialists, Youth and Labour organisations

House searches sometimes accompanied by arrests have been a constant feature of the period under review. Searches were effected in many places in Bihar, Punjab, Delhi, U.P., Bengal and Madras. Socialist literature was taken possession of. Even such harmless and standard books as Cole's on "Money" and a syllabus of socialist literature did not escape seizure. A number of Labour and Youth League organisations were declared illegal on the plea of alleged communist tendencies without any overt act proved against them and some workers connected with such organisations were arrested. At its meeting held at Jubbulpore the A.I.C.C. drew the attention of the country to such acts of aggression and appealed to the people to realise that the political salvation of India was bound up with the strengthening of the Congress. The same meeting also pointed to the flagrant abuse of the Foreigners' Act whereby a number of Congressmen in Gujrat, Karnatak and elsewhere were externed from British India where they had resided and carried on business for years, and thus they were deprived of the opportunity of carrying on their normal legitimate activity

Repression in Bengal

In Bengal, apart from Socialist and Labour

associations all political activity was sought to be suppressed. The resolution of the Working Committee on the Poorna Swaraj Day Celebrations was tampered with in transit and published in papers in a mutilated form. The censor cut out from the body of the pledge all reference to Independence and sacrifice and suffering to be undergone to achieve the goal of independence. Similar suppression was again resorted to when the Bengal Government prohibited the publication of the President's appeal for the detenus day or any news connected with the observance of the same. To describe the trials and sufferings of Bengal more space would be required than is possible in this brief report. All the facts are not even known to us. The detention without trial of thousands of youngmen which constitutes the greatest grievance of Bengal is well-known. The A.I.C.C. in its meeting at Jubbulpore strongly condemned this continuous policy of repression and expressed the opinion that it was high time for the Government either to discharge the detenus or give them a fair trial through the ordinary law courts. The Committee also assured the people of Bengal in general and the detenus in particular of their full sympathy in their affliction.

Apart from the question of detenus there were rumours, sometimes authenticated of extreme severity and repression by the police and the military stationed in many parts of East Bengal and Midnapur. The strict censorship over the Press in Bengal did not allow facts to be brought to light and it was felt that the guilty and the innocent, not unoften the latter, were being subjected to humiliating suppression

and harassment. Some facts about the activities of the military stationed in these parts were disclosed in the Assembly and these revealed an alarming state of affairs. This induced the Congress party in the Assembly to appoint a committee with Shri Mohanlal Saksena as convener to investigate and gather facts about repression in Bengal. Shri Saksena wanting to know the attitude of the Bengal Government towards his committee was informed that the Government would not countenance the activities of his committee. He was ultimately forced to turn back by a prohibitory order of the district magistrate of Tipperah against his entry in that district. The police arrested the person who had been entrusted by him with the task of tabulating the mass of evidence and information collected, and seized all documents in his possession. Evidently the Government did not want the light of day to fall upon its repressive activities in the province.

Political Prisoners

The disabilities of the political prisoners in Indian jails have been from time to time brought to the notice of the public by recurring outbursts of terrorism of jail officials in suppressing what they considered refractory conduct on the part of political prisoners and more powerfully by hunger-strikes undertaken by prisoners. Strictly speaking these hunger-strikes involve a breach of the jail discipline, but the helpless position of a prisoner very often leaves him no other alternative but to take recourse to this method if he is to avoid constant humiliation and loss of his few and restricted rights and privileges. The memory of the deaths of Jatin Das

and Phongy Vijaya is still fresh in the memory of the nation. It was reported in the Press in March. 1935 that the hunger-strike of some political prisoners in Dacca jail had been treated with great severity. Some three prisoners had been given 20 lashes each and the terms of imprisonment of others had been extended by several months. The recent case of hunger-strike of Shri J. C. Chatterji in the Lucknow jail again drew public attention to the treatment of political prisoners. It is futile for Government to plead, that some prisoners take to hunger-strike out of mischief or with a view to coerce the jail authorities or Government to meet their demands however unreasonable. People do not put their lives in peril for imaginary grievances. Congressmen, their friends, and those who have cared to inquire know the lot of political prisoners in India. They know how the amendments introduced in the jail rules in 1930 are worked in practice. Those granted A and B class can be counted on fingers. Even the lot of these is unenviable. They have to live more or less in solitary confinements for long periods. The C class prisoners, who form the bulk of the political prisoners receive usually worse treatment than what is meted out to hardened criminals. It has been our experience that the jail authorities attempt to repress their spirits. Their bodies and minds are starved. Indian jails even for hardened criminals require a good deal of reformation. For politicals they become veritable hells. Many youngmen and women have come out of these purgatories with their health permanently shattered. Premature deaths among them have deprived the nation of promising fruitful service,

Some definite plan and policy must be evolved to arrest this huge mental and physical suffering, loss of life and consequent injury to the nation.

Muzzling of Indian Press

While repression has been in full swing the Indian press is kept completely gagged and muzzled. All free expression of opinion is suppressed The national press in India unless it is of a particular brand is debarred from all Government patronage. Many papers are on the official black list and get no advertisement or any other Government work. Views apart, even the publication of news is penalised. No opportunity is given to the Press to prove the authenticity of the news published in a court of law. Papers have to deposit heavy securities and whenever they are supposed to have offended, these securities are forfeited. The steps taken by the authorities to suppress all news about the Quetta earthquake except the official version, is a glaring instance. Several papers, among them, the well-known Free Press Journal had to cease publication on that occasion. The resolution of the Working Committee demanding an inquiry in this affair could not find place in the press. Even the publication of authorised versions of Assembly proceedings is sufficient cause for executive action.

According to an official statement action was taken against 72 newspapers with a deposit of Rs. 25,050. Since 1930, 160 newspapers deposited a total of Rs. 252,851 as security and 348 newspapers that failed to deposit or redeposit security after confiscation were either not started or ceased publication.

Newspapers in India are either proprietory or capitalist concerns. Most of them serve the national cause only incidentally They are therefore sensitive to financial losses. There is no powerful organisation among them. Whenever their most vital liberties are affected they content themselves with feeble protests at their annual gatherings unaccompanied by any organised action. The Anglo-Indian Press is indifferent, for they enjoy immunity from all coercive action. These know only the Imperial accepted politics. They, like every other British commercial and industrial interest, are here for the exploitation of the country. They cater mostly for their community, official and non-official. They lose no opportunity to oppose all national aspirations.

The Englishman waxes eloquent in denunciation when civil liberty is suppressed in Nazi Germany or Facist Italy. His moral indignation knows no bounds when Italians drop aerial bombs. But the suppression of civil liberty in India finds him an apologist. The Bombing raids in the Frontier are for civilising the wild tribes. Self interest blinds the Englishman's moral, intellectual and political perspective. This is understandable. But what in India one fails to understand is the absence of concerted action on the part of all political national parties against the ever increasing encroachment on civil liberties. In other countries all parties irrespective of label combine to resist encroachment upon individual liberty. It is not fully realised that by this indifference the liberties of the whole nation are being progressively curtailed. India today by these repeated and unchallenged invasions of individual liberty is as if under a martial regime.

OUR LOSSES

Our losses during this period have been heavy. Death in the case of all except Sir Dinsha Wacha, was premature. Used to comfortable life the young patriots had their vitality impaired by the rigours and hardships of jail life. They had great service and sacrifice to their credit. There was promise of still greater service had they but lived. They all passed away in harness.

In a peaceful non-violent struggle the opponent can resort to violence and shooting only occasionally. But the deterioration in health and vitality due to the deprivations the rigours and humiliations of jail life and lathi blows often prove as fatal as any bullet shot. But for these Tilak might have been spared to us for many years more. Lalaji, Motilal and Vithalbhai might yet have guided our path and adorned our councils. All these brave souls and those who passed away recently must be counted among our martyrs as truly as those who were the victims of gun shots or those who with firm unfaltering steps mounted the gallows.

B. N. Sasmal

The first to leave us was Shri B. N. Sasmal, a courageous soul and a man of great organizing capacity. He had just been elected to the Assembly. Before however he could take his seat death snatched him from us. In him Bengal has lost one of her brave sons.

Abhyankar

He was followed by Shri Abhyankar whose wit and humour straight talk and rugged strength it will be difficult to replace. One misses him in the

A. I. C. C. where when he stood up to speak all eyes and ears were expectant. It is well known that his health was impaired by jail life. He had just been elected to the Assembly. One was looking forward to see the often dull and drab proceedings of this body enlivened by his wit and ready repartee. But before he could attend its meetings he was called to eternal rest.

A. T. Gidwani

Shri Acharya A. T. Gidwani educationist, scholar, speaker and writer, a man of many gifts was the next to follow. His health after his incarceration in the native state jail of Nabha was never normal. Yet like every congressman he had to court jail often in British India. He had a charming personality. Sindh lost its best in him.

T. A. K. Sherwani

Nature was not satisfied. Immediately following Gidwani came the sudden demise of Shri T. A. K. Sherwani. Tall and majestic and to all appearance in robust health, who could have suspected that he carried the fatal germs of jail life in his body? He was an indefatigable worker in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. Frank by nature he never could tolerate cant or hypocrisy. Yet there was no bitterness in him. The country and the Congress party in the Assembly are the poorer for his loss.

Arif Hasvi

Yet another silent unassuming national muslim leader of Delhi, Shri Arif Hasvi passed away with the advent of the new year. Delhi wanted to honour itself by electing him as a delegate and a member of the P. C. C. though he had been ailing long and there

was little hope of his recovery. Upon the representation of Delhi the Working Committee modified the rule of manual labour in the new constitution to enable him to be elected.

Deep Narayan Singh

In the sudden death of Shri Deep Narayan Singh the Assembly has lost another of its Congress members and a fine speaker, the country a sturdy patriot and sound nationalist and the people of Bihar a friend and philanthropist whose place it will be difficult to fill.

Shahpurji Saklatwala

The death of Shri Shahpurji Saklatwala has removed a champion of the submerged and exploited classes all over the world. He was an active member of the British Communist Party, whom he represented twice in Parliament. In his death India has lost a fearless champion of her cause in England.

Dinshaw Wacha

Next came Sir Dinshaw Wacha hoary with age. He was the oldest living ex-president of the Congress. At the time of the Jubilee the President Babu Rajendra Prasad went to pay him respects at his home in Bombay. He was one of the three great Parsi Pioneers in the Congress and was its General Secretary from 1896 to 1910. He presided over the 17th session of the Congress at Calcutta. Sir Dinshaw was a relic from a past which has almost disappeared.

Nabin Chandra Bardoloi

The Congress, Assam and the Assembly are poorer to-day on account of the sudden and unexpected death of Shri Nabin Chandra Bardoloi. He was the General Secretary of the Reception Committee of the

Gauhati Congress. He was the life and soul of the Congress movement in Assam.

Kamla Nehru

The ideal of modern Indian womanhood passed away with the departure of Kamala. She combined in herself the traditional virtue of devotion to home and the modern idea of service to the community. Intensely religious, she was loved and honoured by all. Brought up in the lap of luxury and with a tender health she wore herself away with the hardships and deprivations incidental to a revolutionary movement. Amidst all troubles, physical and mental, her face was ever bright with a bewitching smile. The nation even though it knew the critical condition of her health for some time was stunned by the news of her death. There was a spontaneous outburst of grief and friends and political opponents joined together to send messages of sympathy to Jawaharlalji in his great bereavement.

The gaps in our ranks created by the passing away of so many young patriots in a brief space of a year and a half, will be hard to fill. We can only hope and pray that we be given the necessary sacrifice and strength to carry on the struggle that they carried on so valiantly to a successful issue to the good of India and humanity. May their souls rest in peace!

QUETTA EARTHQUAKE

An earthquake of appalling intensity destroyed the city of Quetta and the neighbouring villages in the early hours of Friday the 31st May 1935. The destruction of life and property caused by this calamity was on an unprecedented scale. It is estimated that 20 thousand corpses remained buried under the debris in Quetta city alone. The total number of dead in the area was estimated to be more than 50 thousand.

The city was sealed under military guard on the 2nd of June, two days after the quake. The authorities stated that they had been satisfied that there was no more possibility of further survivors to be rescued. The refugees were sent to different places in Sind and the Punjab. Admission of private individuals into the area was prohibited from June 3.

As soon as the news reached Sind, there were offers of help from prominent citizens and public organisations. There were similar offers from the Punjab. All these offers were rejected by the Government. The reasons given were far from convincing. The President who was in Bombay at this time, deputed the Working General Secretary to Sind to co-operate with Shri Jairamdas in the work of relief. Kripalaniji was also asked to proceed to Quetta and study the condition and to keep the President and the public informed of the situation there to enable them to render the necessary help in the way it was required. Before any thing could however be done entry into Quetta was prohibited.

In a press statement the President pointed out

that from his experience in Bihar he could unhesitatingly say that living persons could be recovered from under the debris several days after the quake, and therefore all possible efforts should have been made to rescue them. He also pointed out that the attitude of the authorities in refusing help from public organisations was unintelligible. Several public organisations had rendered invaluable services in Bihar and their services had been recognised by the Government itself.

The request of Gandhiji, the President and the two General Secretaries of the Congress for permission to go to Quetta just to study the situation and to indicate to the public the measures and method of help required, were also turned down by the Government. The Government's contention was that it had ample resources to deal with the situation. This was far from the fact. Even those from among the refugees who praised the relief work done by the military complained that the resources available there were too inadequate to cope with the situation. The evacuation not only of the survivors but of the seriously wounded had been made necessary by the inadequacy of these resources. The evacuation of the latter was undertaken without proper medical attendance and the necessary diet for them during the long journey from Baluchistan to Sind in the hot season. The Government while not allowing public men and public organisations to enter Quetta even though provided with their own food and other necessities and not drawing upon the meagre resources at Quetta, showed itself most touchy about public criticism of their methods. Offending newspapers were proceeded against under the Press Emergency

Act for criticising the Quetta relief policy. The Free Press Journal of Bombay lost a security of Rs. 2,000 for publication of two articles namely "Lives can even now be saved" and "Anomalies of Quetta Relief." On demand of a further security of Rs. 20,000 the Journal ceased publication. The security of Rs. 1,000 of the Bombay Standard was similarly forfeited for an article under the heading "Quake relief and quack remedy." The Tej of Delhi also lost its security of one thousand. Several other papers fared the same fate.

The President's request to be allowed to render help to the rural areas round about Quetta about which no information whatsoever was available was also not acceded to by the Government. Under these circumstances all that was possible was to help the refugees in Sind, the Punjab and the North West Frontier Provinces and elsewhere. From the public there was a demand for a central relief committee. The President therefore formed the Quetta Central Relief Committee with prominent public men from all parts of India, on it. Babu Rajendra Prasad was the President of this committee, Shri Jairamdas Daulatram from Sind and Dr. Gopichand from the Punjab were the General Secretaries.

The public had not been satisfied with reasons given by the Government for prohibiting entry in Quetta of public men, of Relief parties and the surrounding areas in Baluchistan. Nor were they satisfied with the measures of relief undertaken. There were ugly rumours. Whenever papers ventured to criticize the Government policy or voice public feelings they were penalised. Under such circumstances

there was a universal demand for sifting a public inquiry by an impartial tribunal. The Working Committee passed a resolution in this behalf at its meeting at Wardha in August last. After recording its sorrow and tendering its condolence and sympathies to the bereaved and sufferers and endorsing the action taken by the president in forming the Central Relief Committee for collecting funds and administering relief, the Working Committee pressed for an impartial inquiry in the happenings at Quetta in the following words:—

"The Working Committee while recognising the efforts made by the authorities at Quetta to meet the situation with the resources at their disposal, is of opinion based on the published statements of eye-witnesses, official and non-official, that many persons under the debris could have been rescued if the digging operations had been undertaken on an adequate scale and not stopped after two days and if the offered help from the public had not been rejected.

The Working Committee is of opinion that the Government should appoint a commission composed of officials and non-officials to enquire into the allegations made by the public and, in some respects, supported by published statements of officials; viz.,

1. that the statement made on behalf of the Govt. when assistance was offered, that they had ample resources to deal with the situation in Quetta does not appear to be borne out by facts;
2. that they unjustifiably turned away such proffered assistance;
3. that they ought to have recruited available

assistance from neighbouring areas to cope properly with the emergency;

4. that whilst every European resident of the affected area was accounted for, no adequate attempt was made in respect of the Indian residents and there was similar discrimination between Indians and Europeans in the matter of rescue, relief and salvage."

This resolution of the Congress could be published in the press only in a mutilated form.

In the Simla session of the Assembly a resolution was moved for a mixed committee of officials and non-officials to investigate the handling of the situation after the Quetta earthquake. The resolution was lost by 4 votes. The defeat was due to the absence of seven of the Congress members at the time of voting. There was feverish canvassing on the side of the Government which seemed to resent every adverse expression of opinion. Shri Bhulabhai Desai referred to the touchiness of the Government in their question and interpreted it as evidence of a guilty conscience. The very resistance of the Government to a reasonable request for an inquiry, roused suspicion

PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS

As usual there were several public demonstrations during this period. Poorna Swaraj day, January 26, 1935 and 1936, the national week, the J. P. C. protest day, the Detenu Day, the celebration in connection with the 50th anniversary of the Indian National Congress.

Poorna Swaraj Day

This day has been observed as the Independence Day ever since 1930. In the December session of 1929 the Congress declared its goal to be Poorna Swaraj. 26th January 1930 and that date every year was to be celebrated as the Poorna Swaraj Day, when the nation among other things was to declare its resolve never to rest till Complete Independence was attained. The Independence Declaration of 1930 was made on the eve of the inauguration of the Salt Satyagraha. The Independence pledge was designed then to suit the occasion. The 1935 declaration was to be made under changed circumstances. The Working Committee therefore issued a new pledge. The statement accompanying the pledge pointed out that civil disobedience having been suspended there was not to be any breach of ordinances or other laws or orders promulgated by any authority central or local. Consistently with this, silent processions were to be taken to places of meetings where the pledge of Independence was to be taken. Where meetings were prohibited every household was to meet at the appointed time and take the pledge and inform the nearest committee of having done so.

The pledge reminded the people that Complete Independence was their birth right and they would

not rest till it was achieved. To attain the goal they would consider no sacrifice too great to be undergone and would seek to promote heart unity among the different communities and devote their energies to the working out of the various other items of the constructive programme.

The day was celebrated throughout India without interference except in Bengal and Mysore. We have already described how the pledge was mutilated by the censor in Bengal. In a place or two there was also interference with the hoisting of the national flag. In Mysore the hoisting of the national flag was prohibited for six months. The report of celebrations were sent to the press and received by the A. I. C. C. office. The day was observed in the remotest corners of the country.

Similar observances marked the Independence Day in January 1936.

J. P.C. Report

In response to a persistent demand from the public, February 7th 1935 was fixed by the President as protest day against the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms. A model resolution following the lines of the resolution of the Working Committee in this behalf passed at Patna in December 1934 was issued and adopted at public meetings throughout India. In several places notably in Bombay the resolution was adopted at a Joint meeting of all the progressive political parties in the country. The demonstration proved that even distant villages were not unaware of the dangers that lurked under the new unwanted constitution.

National Week

The National Week from April 6 to 13 was observed as usual. To the constructive work the strengthening of the Congress organisation by the enrolment of members, was added this time.

Detenu Day

The All India Detenu Day was observed all over the country on May 19, 1935. In accordance with the President's instructions provincial organisations made arrangements for collection of funds for the relief of distress among the families and the dependents of the detenus who were forcibly and without fair trial by a court of law, deprived of their liberty and thus their families and dependents were deprived of their bread winners. Funds for the help of the families and dependents of detenus were raised and sent to the head office to be disbursed under the control of the Working Committee. Except in Bengal there was no interference in the observance of this day or in the collection of funds. There the publication of any information regarding the Detenu Day or any information regarding any meeting or any action or statement in connection therewith or information regarding any meeting calling for the release of the detenus, was prohibited under the provisions of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act on the plea that such action tended to excite sympathy or secure adherents to the terrorist movement. This action which sought to deprive the families and dependents of the detenus of public help and support showed the length to which the Government could go. It was also an invasion of the right of the press to give news. A conference of the Indian dailies

in Calcutta passed a resolution recording its emphatic protest against this order.

In a statement, in reply to the Bengal Government the President showed that sympathy expressed with the detenus and their families and dependents did not and could not mean sympathy with terrorism. He said the day was intended to be a protest against detention of a large number of persons without trial by a court of law and without any opportunity being given to them to meet any charges that the Government might prefer against them. He also pointed out that it was one of the recognised canons of civilised jurisprudence that a man should be held to be innocent until he had been proved guilty and that the whole country had felt the injustice of a law which reversed the ordinary rules of justice and fair play. In view of the fact that the number of persons detained was very large and their detention was for unlimited periods and had in many cases extended to years, the President said it was but natural that the country should demand their release, or in the alternative an open trial in ordinary courts of law.

No large donations were received but small collections made by P. C. Cs. and individuals came up to Rs. 15,049/15/3.

The Working Committee at Wardha authorised Shri Surendra Mohan Moitra to make recommendations regarding aid to be given to families of detenus in Bengal On such recommendations being received, the office made a total disbursement of Rs. 9,313/2 from the Fund up to the date of the present report.

Congress Golden Jubilee

The fiftieth anniversary of the Congress, popularly

known as the Congress Golden Jubilee, was throughout India celebrated under instruction from the Working Committee on December 28th, 1935. That day, fifty years back the first session of the Congress was held in Bombay in the hall of the Gokaldas Tejpal Pathshala, Gwalia Tank with "a sprinkling of delegates who could scarcely be called elected representatives but who were nevertheless true servants of the people." The functions in connection with the Jubilee were marked everywhere by enthusiasm worthy of the occasion. Although the decision taken by the Working Committee was somewhat late the spontaneous response from the public exceeded all expectation. The success of these celebrations has proved the the strength of the Congress and its hold on the popular mind throughout India. Apart from the programme of public demonstrations laid down by the Working Committee, the A. I. C. C. office published a History of the Congress, 1885-1935, by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya in the English language to commemorate the occasion. The book has been translated in Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Urdu, Telugu and Tamil and has more than one edition in several languages. For general political education, a series of eleven brochures in popular style by well known authors were also published dealing with various aspects of our national problems. Opportunity was taken of the occasion by many provincial and local Congress Committees to bring out the history of their respective activities in connection with the national movement. Many municipalities and local bodies participated in the celebrations. In some places this was interfered with by the authorities. Being the place where the first

Congress session had been held, Bombay was chosen for the All India function, which role she fulfilled according to expectation. The demonstrations and celebrations held by the provinces were not less enthusiastic or less picturesque. Hundreds of public bodies sent their messages of good will and felicitations to the Congress. The messages received from public bodies and distinguished individuals in India and abroad and enthusiastic notices in the Press, both Indian and Anglo-Indian, added to the grandeur of the occasion.

OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT

The policy of the Congress towards the reforms contained in the new Government of India Act was enunciated so far back as June 1934 when the Working Committee passed a resolution on the White Paper which was endorsed by the open session in Bombay. The resolution stated that the White Paper did not express the will of the people of India and had been condemned by all the Indian political parties and fell far short of the Congress goal if it did not actually retard the progress towards it. It stated that the only satisfactory alternative to the White Paper was a constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly. This opinion of the Committee was reiterated with greater emphasis when the J. P. C. Report was out. In a resolution of the Working Committee passed at Patna in December 1934 it was pointed out that the proposals made in the J. P. C. Report were in several respects even worse than those contained in the White Paper which had been condemned by every shade of opinion in India as reactionary and unacceptable. The Commtttee was of opinion that the scheme was designed to facilitate and perpetuate the domination and exploitation of this country by an alien people under a costly mask and that it was fraught with greater danger than the existing constitution and that the nation would prefer to struggle to its goal under the present constitution humiliating and intolerable as it was until it was replaced by one framed by a Constituent Assembly. The Committee requested the

members of the Assembly to reject the scheme of Government sought to be thrust upon India in the name of reforms. The new Government of India Act as it actually emerged out of Parliament was more reactionary and retrograde than the recommendations contained in the J. P. C. Report.

INDIAN STATES

The question of Congress policy towards the Indian States cropped up every now and then throughout the period under review. It engaged the attention of the President, the Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. This was due to the fact that the Indian States were incorporated in the federal scheme of the new reforms. The states were to be represented by the autocratic rulers and the people were nowhere in the picture. Not a single representative of theirs found a seat at the various Round Table Conferences.

During this period there was also widespread agrarian discontent in some states. In others there was communal trouble. Whatever the cause of discontent, popular movements everywhere were put down with great severity and harshness. This kept the question of the States constantly before the country.

In a public pronouncement made in December, 1934, the President pointed out that the Congress attitude on this question had been defined at the Calcutta session in 1928 and no occasion having arisen since then to make any other pronouncement, that resolution should be regarded as representing the Congress policy in the matter. The question, however, was brought forward for discussion in the A. I. C. C. meeting held at Jubbulpore in April 1935 where a resolution was passed declaring that the interests of

the people of the Indian States were as much a matter of concern of the Indian National Congress as those of the people of British India. The Committee also assured the people of the States of its full support in their struggle for freedom. The controversy in the Press however continued and made it necessary for the Working Committee to issue a more comprehensive statement in August last from Wardha which was adopted by the A. I. C. C. in Madras in October last. The statement declared that the Congress recognised that the States' people had an inherent right to Swaraj as much as the people of India. It had accordingly declared itself in favour of establishment of representative and responsible Government in the States. The Congress however made it clear that the responsibility and burden of carrying on the struggle for Swaraj within the States must necessarily fall on the State people themselves and it could under existing circumstances exercise only moral and friendly influence even though the people of India whether under the British, the princes or any other power are geographically and historically one and indivisible.

With regard to any amendment of that portion of the Government of India Bill which deals with the relation of the Indian States to the Indian Federation the statement made it plain that as the Congress had rejected the entire scheme of the so called reforms it may not ask for any amendment of any part of the scheme.

COMMUNAL UNITY

An attempt was made to find a solution to the communal problem through informal talks between the President, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Mr. M. A.

Jinnah, President of the Muslim League, which proceeded for more than a month at Delhi. The object was to arrive at an agreed settlement with a view to replace the so called Communal Award and thus minimise communal discord and bickerings to enable the country to present a united front. The negotiations terminated on March 1, 1935. The talks proceeded on the basis of joint electorates. So far as Babu Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah were concerned the prolonged talks had brought about a substantial measure of agreement and left to themselves, they would have reached a settlement which, they had every hope, would have been endorsed by the Congress and the Muslim League. But their attempt to make others outside the two organisations to agree to the same failed.

In a joint statement to the Press, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah expressed their regret that in spite of best efforts they had not been able to find a formula which would satisfy all the parties concerned. Communal harmony and concord being essential for the progress of the country the yhoped forces would soon arise which would make a future attempt more fruitful.

INDUSTRIAL LABOUR

The Congress has naturally always taken keen interest in the condition of Industrial Labour in the country. In recent years due to the differences between the various labour unions and labour organisations it had not been possible for it to do any thing definite and effective. Wherever as in Gujarat and U. P. such differences did not exist the P. C. Cs had been working in co-operation with labour organisations.

There was at this time a general desire on the part of labour organisations to seek the co-operation of the Congress. There were also unity talks between the labour organisations themselves. The Trade Union Congress started correspondence with the President and a deputation of the organisation met him at Wardha in July last. The President pointed out to the deputation that for the Congress to fruitfully help industrial labour it was necessary for at least the two premier labour organisations to speak with one voice. If and when such unity was brought about the Congress would naturally lend its support and prestige to the legitimate united demands of labour.

The two labour organisations the Trade Union Congress and the National Trade Union Federation after sometime set up a Joint Board consisting of equal number of representatives from both the organisations with Mr. Giri as its President and Mr. Ruikar as its Secretary.

The Working Committee on its side set up a Labour Sub-Committee consisting of Shri K. F. Nariman, Shri Jairamdas Daulatram and Shri J. B. Kripalani with the last as its convener. The functions of the sub-committee were to keep in touch with problems affecting Industrial Labour in India and from time to time to report to and advise the Working to Committee thereon.

A meeting of the Joint Labour Board and the Labour Sub-Committee was arranged to be held at Madras in October last, but it fell through as nobody except Mr. Giri, the President of the Board could be present and he thought that it would serve no useful purpose if he alone carried on the talks in the absence

of any body representing the T. U. C. The meeting had therefore to be postponed to some more favourable time.

The movement for greater unity between the T. U. C. and the N. T. U. F., however continued. In December last proposals at structural unity on some common basis were made by the T. U. C. at Nagpur. These proposals are under consideration of the N. T. U. F. At Nagpur at the same time there was a meeting of the Joint Labour Board. The Board reiterated the necessity of co-operation with the Indian National Congress for the solution of problems affecting the working classes. It resolved that the Joint Board in this connection should meet the Congress Labour Sub-Committee. To this the T. U. C. added that at such a joint meeting it was their desire that the President of the Congress be requested to be present.

Labour Sub-Committee

The Congress Labour Sub-Committee has tried since its inception to keep itself in touch with labour problems and labour organisations in the country. It has wherever possible tried to excercise its moral influence in industrial disputes. It has created a separate department in the A. I. C. C. for labour and appointed a permanent paid secretary Mr. D. Narsinh, M. A., LL. B. for this work.

Peasant Sub-Committee

At the time that the Labour Sub-Committee was formed the formation of another sub-committee for the investigation of the peasants problem was also felt to be necessary. The Working Committee thorefore appointed the Peasant Sub-Committee

consisting of Shri Rajendra Prasad, Shri Vallabhbhai Patel and Shri Purshottamdas Tandon with the last as its convener. The Sub-Committee was to keep in touch with problems affecting peasants and to report and advise the Working Committee thereon. The Sub-Committee has since been engaged in collecting facts and figures and in generally studying the different systems of land tenure and their effect upon the peasantry.

CANCELLATION OF CERTIFICATE TO TEXTILE MILLS

The Congress policy with regard to Swadeshi was defined in a resolution of the Working Committee in July 1934 which was endorsed by the Bombay session. That resolution laid down that so far as cloth was concerned Congressmen were expected to use and encourage the use of only hand-spun and hand-woven khadi to the exclusion of any other cloth. In regard to articles other than cloth the Committee recommended the use of articles manufactured through cottage and small industries, which were in need of popular education for their support and which will accept the guidance of the Congress organisations in regulating prices and in the matter of wages and welfare of labour. This formula was evolved in recognition of the fact, that larger and organised industries which can or do command state aid, are in no need of services of Congress organisations or any Congress effort in their behalf. This emphasis on the products of village industries was again laid by resolution IV and V of the open session at Bombay dealing with the formation of the Village Industries Association and the Congress policy with regard to Exhibitions and Demonstrations.

Circumstances during the civil disobedience struggle and the exigency of enforcing the boycott of foreign cloth had led the Congress and other associated organisations to introduce a system of certification of such textile mills as accepted certain pledges. These pledges were however not honoured by most of the mills. The Working Committee, therefore, at its meeting held in Delhi, January 1935, decided to cancel the old certificates and expressed the opinion that owing to the regrettable failure of the textile mill-owners to keep their pledges it was not possible to continue the system of certification by the Congress or associated bodies.

INDIANS OVERSEAS

Only a fully sovereign state with power to retaliate can hope to protect its nationals settled or temporarily residing abroad. The Indian Government is only a subordinate branch of the Government at Whitehall and its protests, even when made, are not heeded either by the Colonial office in England or by the Dominions concerned with the respect which would have been shown to an independent popular Government capable and willing to take retaliatory measures. Many of our friends overseas pressed with realities of the situation there and finding themselves helpless seem to forget this fact. The Congress may not approach the present Government with any requests knowing full well that such requests lack yet the necessary sanction. In politics requests however reasonable are only accepted when they are supported by power behind. In the present circumstances therefore the Congress can only keep the general public informed of these grievances and send our brothers overseas their sympathy.

Under these limitations the Congress has been carefully watching the situation. The only resolution that the Working Committee passed was in September 1934 on the deplorable condition of the Indian settlers in Zanzibar assuring them of its sympathy in the contemplated forcible expropriation of their just rights in a land in which they had settled for centuries. The Bartlett-Last Report on the basis of which the anti-Indian decrees had been promulgated in Zanzibar in 1934 was proved to be a one-sided, exaggerated and misleading document even on the showing of the Agricultural Indebtedness Commission appointed by the Government of Zanzibar on the protest and representation made by the Indian settlers against those decrees. The report of the commission showed that the proportion of agricultural lands actually owned by the Indian settlers was only 12½ p. c., whereas the Bartlett-Last report alleged that not less than half the agricultural land had passed into the hands of the Indian money-lenders and that half of the remainder was heavily encumbered to them. The Agricultural Commission also showed that only six per cent of the total clove trees in Zanzibar were owned by Indians. There was therefore no foundation for the passing of anti-Indian decrees which threaten the existence of the settlers in the island.

The same tale of deprivation of rights and of the fruits of their labour comes from Fiji and Kenya. The question of the introduction of the system of nomination in place of election in the councils and municipalities of Fiji has drawn public attention through agitation in the Press. The reactionary alteration has in effect destroyed the franchise of the

Indians. But the question of land tenure cuts the very ground under the feet of the Indian settlers. The present law granted only a leasehold of land for a period not exceeding 21 years and prohibited permanent alienation of land to non-Fijians. The great bulk of the Indian settlers cultivated land as tenants under Fijian landlords. Owing to the changed attitude of the Fiji Government they find it difficult to have their leases renewed after the termination of their original lease.

The representation of the Government of India to the British Government on the marketing legislation in Kenya has resulted only in some amendments being introduced in the body of the bill which may to a certain extent relieve the severity of the measure although it cannot be acceptable to Indians in principle. The original bill has been in existence in Uganda and Tonganyika with all its objectionable features since 1932. By an order-in-council the Kenya Government proposed to extend the boundary of reserved land for Europeans by another 6,355 Sq. miles thus making a total of 16,700 Sq. miles, thus practically excluding Indians from all the good soil in Kenya. The representation of the Kenya Indians asking the Government of India to take a strong stand and safeguard their interests has not yet been properly responded to.

The situation in South Africa has also considerably deteriorated. The only occupation open to Indians in the Union is trade and commerce. But fresh fetters are being forged to drive them out of this field. The Natal Council has passed an ordinance called the Rural Dealers' Licensing Law Amendment

Ordinance giving unfettered authority to the Government and the Health Board to oppose the grant of any license for an occupation. Under the guise of improving the slums, numerous occupiers of property in Durban have been driven out of their homes and no measures have been taken to re-home them. The Malaya Indians have carried on their isolated existence without any political or municipal rights. Every member in the Legislative, Federal or State Councils or other public bodies in the island is nominated by the Government.

Recently comes the woeful tale of grievances from Indian residents in Iraq, a country whose nationals are settled in India and own property and carry on trade and commerce unhampered.

The Congress party in the Assembly does in this connection whatever little it can. Shri Govind Ballabh Pant has given notice of the Overseas Indian Reciprocity Bill in the present session of the Assembly. But even if the Bill is passed by a non-official majority its provisions will be worked by the present executive. The result in practice will be nil. Even if the Government of India were willing it could do little, being but a subordinate branch of the British Government and having nothing to do with the moulding of Imperial policies with which this question is intimately and inseparably connected. It is this that makes the Congress to insist that no scheme of Swaraj will be complete unless it includes among other things foreign affairs. No sovereign state can allow these affairs to be regulated for it by another state. The very essense of sovereignty is freedom from external control except that which is reciprocal,

PRESIDENT'S TOUR

During his term of office the President, Babu Rajendra Prasad extensively toured round the country inspite of his feeble health. The tour was undertaken to strengthen the Congress organisation, in terms of the new constitution, and generally to help the constructive programme. It was not confined, as such tours generally are, to urban areas. It included small villages where the advent of the Congress President was an event in the life of the oldest inhabitants. The tour began in April 1935 and ended with February 1936 with a break during the monsoon.

The reception accorded to the President everywhere he went, the huge gatherings that collected to hear him, the numerous addresses from municipalities, local Boards, Panchayets, commercial and other public organisations that he received and the purse collections all bore an eloquent testimoney not only to the personal popularity of the President but also to the hold that the Congress has over the people.

The tour began with the Punjab during the national week. The president however could not go beyond Lahore owing to the sudden break down of his health. The abandoned tour in the Punjab was completed later in June last when the President was there in connection with the Quetta Earthquake relief.

After the A. I. C. C. meeting at Jubbulpore held in the third week of April the President visited one after another the provinces of Berar, Karnatak, Maharashtra and Bomby. In Berar he performed the opening ceremony of the Berar Political Conference. Similarly in Karnatak he opened the proceedings of

the Karnatak Provincial conference at Mangalore. This part of the tour had been arranged to go up to the end of June and was intended to include the provinces of Nagpur and Mahakosal. But the unfortunate catastrophic earthquake at Quetta on 31st May, 1935 compelled the President to abandon the rest of the programme and to hasten to Karachi to organise a Central Relief Committee for the relief of the quake-sufferers. In the course of the tour in Berar, Karnatak, Maharashtra and Bombay, the President covered more than 1,500 miles in car and as many by train crossing and recrossing the Western Ghats several times. The programme was everywhere overcrowded specially so in Maharashtra. The purse collection in Maharashtra, one of the poor provinces of India amounted to Rs. 24,950. All this money was collected from the middle class and the poor. There were no big donations.

The Monsoon months were spent by the President in Bihar, Wardha and Allahabad. The tour was resumed in October after the A. I. C. C. meeting at Madras. It included Tamil Nad, Andhra, Kerala and part of Mahakosal and ended with the arrival of the President in Bombay to participate in the All India Jubilee function there.

In Tamil Nad 14 Congress districts were covered. The President travelled about a couple of thousand miles by car and another thousand miles by train. He addressed 116 meetings provided for in the programme besides many other wayside meetings. He received numerous addresses from Municipalities, Local Boards, Panchayets and various other public

bodies The purse collections in Tamil Nad came up to Rs. 20,421/3/-.

The Andhra tour lasted from November 10th to November 30th. The distance traversed was more than two thousand miles in car. The collections which include both Purse Collections and ear-marked amounts came upto Rs. 35,077/1/-. Here too there were numerous meetings and the usual number of addresses from public bodies.

In Kerala the President spent, eight days beginning with the 1st of December. He covered within this time 470 miles by car and 325 miles by train, addressed 57 meetings and was presented with purses for Congress work amounting to Rs. 4,205/14/5.

In February 1936 he toured in one or two districts of his own province of Bihar. Here too as in other places he had the same crowded programme. There were pressing invitations from other provinces which could not be accepted for want of time. Sindh had beed pressing its invitation upto the last but had to be disappointed.

The total purse collections made by the President during the year came up to Rs. 89,297/10/5. One-eighth of this amount excepting ear-marked donations was received by the A. I. C. C. as its quota and the remaining seven-eighth was left with the provinces. The A. I. C. C. share came upto Rs. 9,440/12/10.

FOREIGN PROPAGANDA

In the old constitution there was provision for "committees outside India as may from time to time be recognised by the Congress or the A. I. C. C." to be regarded as component parts of the Congress. According to this provision recognition had been given to committees in Great Britain, America, Japan and S. Africa as affiliated organisations with authority to form subordinate committees. The policy, however, not having worked satisfactorily, the recognition of some of these organisations had to be withdrawn. The new Congress constitution made no provision for the recognition or affiliation of any committee outside India and Burma.

This withdrawal of recognition of foreign committees did not however imply that the Congress minimised the value of or had grown indifferent to cultivating foreign opinion. It only meant that if any country was really interested in the Indian question it should form organisations of its own upon its own responsibility. The duty of the Congress office under these circumstances would be to supply to such organisations and to individuals really interested in our struggle, authentic information about the activities of the Congress or any political, social or economic questions connected with India..

In accordance wit this scheme the A. I. C. C. office issued weekly foreign letters during the period under report, giving facts reviewing and recording current events in India. The letters were sent to England, Ireland, the Continent, America, and Japan. The office has tried to develop foreign contacts

through the issue of these letters and circulation of other Congress literature among organisations and individuals who in foreign lands have given indication of interest in India and her problems.

A. I. C. C. OFFICE

The year being a year of re-organisation naturally there was some pressure of work in the office. The application of the new Congress constitution, the explanation, elucidation and interpretation of doubtful points and the enforcement of the time-table required much correspondence with the provinces and the Congress workers. Altogether 74 circulars were issued from the office during the year under report. These deal with the working of the new constitution, organisation of demonstrations, collection of materials of the 1932 struggle, collection of materials for the Congress map and the proposed national museum and regarding political prisoners and organisations under ban. These circulars were more or less promptly responded to by most of the provinces. But it is time that Congress workers devoted some more thought to the problem of running efficient local offices in the interest of work and efficiency of the Congress.

The publications issued by the office during the year exceeded those in previous years owing to the books published in connection with the Congress golden jubilee. The History of the Congress by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and eleven Brochures dealing with various social, political and economic problems of India, added greatly to our work. The office also published 7 numbers of Congress Bulletin during the year which in addition to the proceedings of the A. I. C. C. and the Working Committee always contained a diary of Congress activities and an account of work done by the affiliated institutions, the

A. I. S. A., the A. I. V. I. A., the Harijan Sevak Sangh and generally of the activities of other progressive parties in Indian politics. The number of letters etc. despatched by the office during the period was 14,700.

The Working Committee made a provision for a liberal Provident Fund for the permanent members of the A. I. C. C. office staff. It also made some permanent leave rules.

The office staff fully co-operated in the disposal of this heavy work. They had sometimes to work on holidays and outside the office hours which they did willingly.

PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES*

At the beginning of 1935 the Congress Parliamentary Board was formed at Patna with Dr. Ansari as President and Syt. Bhulabhai J. Desai as Secretary. It was reconstituted on an elective basis at Jubbulpore in April last in accordance with the Bombay Congress resolution on the subject. The present Board consists of 29 members of whom 25 were elected by the A. I. C. C. and the remaining 4 were coopted by the latter.

Shri Bhulabhai J. Desai is the President of the Board, having been elected as such in September last.

The general election to the Legislative Assembly was held soon after the Bombay Congress and forty-four members were returned on behalf of the Congress. The Congress captured all seats in Madras, Orissa, Bihar, U.P. and C.P. which were open to the general electorates. In many constituencies its candidates were elected by enormous majorities and in some cases the majorities were so great that their opponents had to forfeit their securities. There have been some casualties since. The Congress Party in the Assembly has suffered a series of irreparable losses in the sad and untimely deaths of M. V. Abhyankar, T. A. K. Sherwani, Deep Narayan Sinha, and N. C. Bardoloi. The last two and the first have been replaced by Congress nominees. The present strength of the Congress Party in the Assembly is 43 as it was for the most part in 1935.

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*From the Secretary, Congress Parliamentary Board.

Congress candidates were set up at some bye-elections to the Provincial legislatures also and five members were elected to the Madras Legislative Council and one to the Bihar Provincial Council in the course of the year.

Syt. Bhulabhai J. Desai was elected Chairman and Leader of the Congress Assembly Party. The winter session of the Assembly began on the 20th of January and continued till the first week of April. There were 35 Divisions and the opposition won in 28, which gives a percentage of 80. The majority of the elected Indian members were generally in sympathy with the Congress and but for their support the Congress Party, being in a permanent minority of less than a third, would not have been as effective as it has been. Fxcept on questions arising out of the Communal Award, the members of the Congress Nationalist Party invariably and several members of the Independent Party ordinarily resorted to the same Division and lobby with Congress members. On the very first day the Assembly met, the Congress Party moved for the adjournment of the house with a view to discuss the attitude of the Government towards the Village Industries Association. The Joint Parliamentary Committee Report was discussed for four days and though the Congress Party Resolution was not adopted, the Report was virtually rejected by the House. The Government was asked by the Assembly, among others, to remove the ban on Khudai Khidmatgars, to put an end to the policy of repression, to release all political prisoners, to remove the grievances and improve the lot of labourers. It was censured for its imperialist and an anti-national policy of adminis-

tration on several occasions in various ways. The Assembly refused to grant any supplies to the Railway Board or to the Army Department and carried amendments for the reduction of salt duty and postal charges and ultimately it threw out the Finance Bill. The Assembly recorded its emphatic condemnation of the economic policy of exploitation of the British Government and their agent, the Government of India and expressed its strong disapproval of the Indo-British Trade agreement and pressed for its immediate termination. It also made proposals from time to time for reduction of taxes bearing on the masses, revision of the policy of taxation, and pursuit of a systematic economic plan.

The autumn session of the Assembly lasted for about a month. It met at Simla in the beginning of September mainly to consider the Government's proposal for the re-enactment of the Criminal Law Amendmet Act, 1932. The motion for the consideration of the Bill was rejected and also one for the introduction of the "recommended" Bill. The Finance Bill as well as the Criminal Law Amendment Bill were certified by the Government. The Party initiated legislative measures for the repeal of repressive laws. The motion for the consideration of the Criminal Law Amendment Act Repeal Bill was passed at Simla in the teeth of Government opposition and the next stage for consideration of the clauses was postponed for Delhi where it was frustrated by the casting vote of the President. Syt. Satyamurty's Bill for the repeal of all repressive laws is still pending as the time available for non-official business in the Assembly is quite inadequate. A resolution

voicing the public complaints and feelings in regard to the situation arising out of the Quetta Earthquake was moved and discussed in the house, and resolutions concerning Indians Overseas particularly in Zanzibar and rejecting the official scheme of Indo-Burma trade agreement were, among others, adopted. The Assembly also recorded it sprotest against the bombing of women and children in the Trans-frontier villages.

A large number of questions, about 2000 in number were put by Congress members covering all fields of administration and public activity. The Assembly Party appointed a Committee to enquire into the state of repression and internment without trial of a large number of Indians in Bengal.

In the present Budget session of the Assembly which commenced sitting from February 3rd, the first non-official motion adopted, recommended the appointment of a Joint Army Standing Committee consisting of members of both Houses to advise government on matters connected with the defence of India. The Assembly also passed a resolution asking Government to take steps to extend to the excluded and partially excluded areas the same level of administration as in other parts of India. The Railway Financial policy was censured by a cut motion; also supplies to the Army were reduced to one rupee. The policy of rebuilding Quetta from revenues instead of from capital was similarly censured. The demand of the Executive Council was refused and the forward policy in the N. W. F. province and the general repressive policy in India were condemned by the adoption of cut motions. The

Assembly further recommended the abolition of the Salt Duty and the reduction of the price of post card to the old rate of half-anna. It passed a censure motion on the Government for the threat given to Shri Subhas Chandra Bose that he could not expect to remain at liberty in case of his return to India. It also rejected the Finance Bill recommended by the Viceroy as it had done the previous year. The Government was also censured for excessive expenditure on the reconstruction of Quetta.

The Congress Party in the Assembly have made an earnest endeavour to carry out the instructions of the Congress, to interpret public opinion faithfully, and to promote a national outlook and national interests to the extent possible under the present circumstances.

The record of the activities of the Congress is contained in nine pamphlets, published from time to time.

ALL INDIA SPINNERS ASSOCIATION*

Self-Sufficiency

The year 1935 covers a period of transition towards a new policy for the A. I. S. A. in the production and the distribution of Khadi. One important object of the Khadi work is to afford to the destitute people of the villages as large a volume of employment and relief in the aggregate as possible and to achieve this, the administrative arrangement had been so far designed to concentrate production in areas with special advantage for the purpose and to make the supply converge on points which offered an attractive field for its disposal at a satisfactory or at the best available price. The administrative machinery had therefore during this year, to be adapted to serve primarily the goal of progressive self-sufficiency and to organise the production of cloth primarily to meet requirements of the immediate neighbourhood of each production centre. The change in outlook necessitated a radical reorganisation of the work in the various centres of production. In this connection the secretary toured in the different provinces, visited important centres and villages where the work of actual production is being carried on, and settled the agreements regarding the working of the new policy in consultation with the local workers. Meetings were held, of villagers as also of spinners and weavers in these areas for the purpose of explaining to them the new programme and securing their active co-operation. A close study of the details

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*From the Secretary, All India Spinners' Association.

of the various processes as also of the general working was made with a view to discover whatever room existed for increasing efficiency in each centre so as to facilitate the production of more durable cloth at lower rates. As a result of the investigation the branches made earnest efforts in the following directions :—

1. Planting of suitable varieties of cotton in such areas of production as have been using imported cotton.

2. Improving the carding and slivering work done by carders so that better slivers may be available for spinning.

3. Imparting instructions in carding to spinners so that they can card their own cotton and make their own slivers.

4. Improving the efficiency of the existing wheels by introducing thinner spindles and pulleys so as to increase the revolution of the spindle.

5. Introducing more efficient spinning wheels wherever possible.

6. Insisting upon greater uniformity and better twist in the spinning of yarn.

With a view to facilitate this work, arrangements were made during the year by some of the branches to impart necessary training to workers in charge of the production centres.

The programme of cloth-self-sufficiency is of great value for the betterment of the conditions of the villagers and is being gradually taken up by the people in the centres started, as the benefit derived is being understood by them. The weavers and other male artisans in the centres have already taken

to khadi to a very large extent. Work among the spinners though difficult has been facilitated by the arrangements made by several branches to exchange their yarn for khadi, as also to receive small amounts from their earning as deposit to enable them to make purchases of khadi when required. Efforts made for increasing local consumption amongst other villagers in the areas of production have also received a fair response.

The work of intensive self-sufficiency was steadily carried on at several centres established in different provinces.

Minimum Wage

A departure in policy of a very important character was introduced towards the end of the year with the adoption of the resolution prescribing the payment of a minimum scale of wages to spinners whose earnings had hitherto been wholly inadequate for their maintenance. In the columns of the 'Harijan' Gandhiji expounded his views about the desirability of revising the scale of remuneration for spinning and other services connected with the production of khadi so as to ensure to the workers the minimum requirements of healthy life. The All India Spinners' Association passed a comprehensive resolution on the subject on 11-12-1935. What the spinners received in payment for their labour, so far, was by itself piteously low but having regard to the fact that agriculture is the main occupation of the mass of the people and spinning is treated only as an auxilliary source of income as also the fact that the average earnings of an agriculturist do not very much exceed the full time income of a spinner, hand spinning was

looked upon as rendering substantial help to the poor. But the point of view which has now emerged is that spinning should not serve the poor merely as a supplementary work but it should be made capable of serving wherever necessary, as an independent occupation also. While the new scheme was generally accepted, the workers in many places took a rather serious view of the obstacles which have to be faced in working it out in practice. An increase in wages is bound to be reflected in prices and it was maintained that a rise in price would react adversely on the sales, thereby curtailing the production of khadi, and consequently the volume of employment for the spinners and the other artisans. The workers got an opportunity of a frank discussion of the pros and cons of the new policy among themselves and with Gandhiji when the workers 'conference met at Wardha on October 11, 12 and 13, 1935 alcng with a meeting of the council of the All India Spinners' Association. The conference resulted in a more favourable atmosphere for the inauguration of the new policy. At the same time practical efforts are being made to reduce to a minimum the unfavourable ractions of the change in the scale of wages. It is apparent that to the extent the increase in the earnings of the spinners is balanced by a rise in efficiency, the additional income of the spinners would entail no burden on the consumers. Effective measures therefore are being devised to achieve substantial progress in this respect.

It was also perceived that the welfare of the artisans depended not merely on the scale of money wages but on the benefit in terms of nourishment,

health and efficiency which they derived from the expenditure. The well known fact that considerable proportion of the meagre resources of the villagers is wasted owing to ignorance, opens up a line of endeavour leading to an improvement in their standard of living and securing for them the necessities of life on a considerably lower money wage than would otherwise be possible. This aspect of the question is receiving close attention, and may lead to results of considerable practical value.

Commercial Production

The work of commercial production and sale of khadi carried on with a view to give employment and relief to needy spinners, weavers and other artisans was maintained at a fair level inspite of the difficulties experienced due to continued trade depression. Complete figures have not yet been received from the different branches regarding work done. However such information as has been made available shows that the production of khadi through the institutions controlled by the A.I.S.A. has during the year been about Rs. 30,00000 worth and sales about Rs. 40,00000*. The yardage figures stood at about 80,00000 Sqr. yards.

The economic depression which has set in since 1931 and which still subsists has affected khadi work along with other industries. The reorientation effected by Gandhiji, however, gives hope for a better future by opening out possibilities of consumption of khadi in the centres of production and neighbour-

*The excess of sales figures indicate purchases from private organisations.

ing areas. If these expectations are realised and the villagers come to adopt khadi for their wear, automatic distribution would be ensured and khadi will be permanently placed on a sound footing. At the same time it may be expected that khadi lovers in urban areas will continue to consume all the surplus khadi that can be produced so that employment and relief can be made available to all these villagers who are in need of it.

ALL INDIA VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION* 1935

1. History

The industries that have long sustained millions in the villages in our country have been languishing for lack of opportunities for research to enable the artisans to adapt their processes to meet the present day needs. There has been a dearth of intelligent and venturesome persons who will give the needed momentum for progress. Whatever material there was which could have supplied these needs had migrated into towns seeking "secure" employment which will give a steady income. The artistically inclined deserted the indigenous art and instead of supplying fresh designs for the artisans they wasted their efforts in imitating foreign masters. Those who remained in their rural homes instead of supporting the produce of their neighbours took to patronising foreign imported tinsels. The raw materials which were wrought upon formerly were either allowed to go waste or shipped abroad to be imported back again as manufactured goods. This process has been going on for decades and has brought ruin and distress to our country-side.

If our country was to progress it was imperative that the villages were made centres of activity and to advance economically and culturally. Rural life had to be self-supporting and self-respecting. To foster such conditions it was long felt that a central group of persons should undertake to study the needs of the people and by intensive experiment and research supply the lack of up to date knowledge to the people

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*From the Secretary, A. I. V. I. A.

and help them to organise themselves into self-sufficient groups.

To this end one of the main industries of the country—the textiles—was taken up over a decade ago and the All India Spinners Association wás formed to help that industry. However important that industry was, it was not at all. There still remained all the other arts and crafts that make up the life of the people. Tackling these manifold activities was not possible unless an organised effort was made to gather information from various sources and supply it to others, thus collecting and co-ordinating divergent efforts and diseminating information which was already available.

To complete the good work begun by the All India Spinners Association the Indian National Congress at its 48th session held at Bombay in October, 1934 passed the following resolutions :—

"Whereas organisations claiming to advance Swadeshi have sprung up all over the country with and without the assistance of Congressmen and whereas much confusion has arisen in the public mind as to the true nature of Swadeshi, and whereas the aim of the Congress has been from its inception progressive identification with the masses, and whereas village reorganisation and reconstruction is one of the items of the constructive programme of the Congress, and whereas such reconstruction necessarily implies revival and encouragement of dead or dying village industries besides the central industry of hand-spinning, and whereas this work like the reorganisation of hand-spinning, is possible only through concentrated and special effort unaffeeted by and independent of the

political activities of the Congress, Shri J. C. Kumarappa is hereby authorised to form, under the advice and guidance of Gandhiji, an Association called the All India Village Industries Association as part of the activities of the Congress. The said Association shall work for the revival and encouragement of the said industries and for the moral and physical advancement of the villages and shall have power to frame its own constitution, to raise funds, and to perform such acts as may be necessary for the fulfilment of its objects."

In pursuance of this resolution the All India Village Industries Association was formed at Wardha on the 14th December, 1934 as a self-acting, independent organisation, having for its object village reorganisation, reconstruction, including the revival, encouragement and improvement of village industries, and the moral and physical development of the villagers of India. The affairs of the Association are entrusted to a Board of Management who are to define the programme of village reconstruction work from time to time, to co-ordinate the policy followed in the different centres, to collect, collate and circulate information gathered from workers or agents as to the actual condition of the existing Village Industries, both those that may be flourishing and those that may be perishing, also as to the economic, moral and physical condition of villagers, to carry on research work with the help of specialists and experts and to discover and create a market for surplus village manufactures. This Board was to work under the guidance and advice of Gandhiji. It was decided to locate the office of the Association

at Wardha. Seth Jamnalal Bajaj donated the premises now known as Maganvadi to the Association as his contribution to Maganlal Smarak Fund reserving a portion of the land for the building of a Museum in memory of the late Maganlal Gandhi.

II. Report

Work began with an immediate programme to concentrate attention on the following three pressing needs of the villages.

(a) Sanitation and Hygiene:—In this connection work was carried on in the way of introducing latrines, scavenging, preparing manure from human excreta, sweeping and repairing roads, building drains and filling up case pools, cleaning wells and tanks, providing drinking water, and the economic disposal of carcasses.

(b) Diet: Information on the nutritive values of various foods was collected from experts and broadcast. Experiments were carried on by the Central Office at the Headquarters. Such experiments related to the ways of preparing and cooking foods, the potentiality of various food articles already in use, introducing new articles into the diet, and generally improving the diet of the villagers within the means available to them.

(c) Industries: Incidental to the programme under the second head, were industries connected with food, such as pounding of rice, grinding of wheat, pressing of oil, preparation of gur (Joggery) etc., to which attention was first directed. Following this, encouragement has been given and improvements made in the case of industries such as shelling groundnut, apiculture, and fish-culture, dairying, salt ma-

nufacturing, ginning, Silk and Tasar making, blanket making, carpet making and jute spinning and weaving, paper making, mat making, combs manufacture, cutlery, soap manufacture, stone craft, tanning and disposal of carcasses etc.

In addition to the above, and as a necessary part of the same, work has also been done under the following heads:—

(*d*) Propaganda: Several meetings were held and lectures delivered by those connected with the Association on the programme of the Association and the ideas underlying it. Leaflets have been published and charts and posters made, especially in regard to sanitation and hygiene, diet. Magic lantern slides and lectures are being arranged. Exhibitions of village industries, were organised in various parts of the country, especially in connection with the celebration of the Congress Jubilee. Articles have been contributed from time to time on topics connected with village industries and reconstruction in English and Indian papers and magazines.

Enquiries regarding Soya Beans, gur-making, paper, chakkis (grinding implements), oil-pressing, coir-spinning, tanning, soap-making, and such like were dealt with from time to time, and wherever possible enquirers were put in touch with experts who could give the necessary information and assistance.

(*e*) Research: What has been in the way of research has been described under sanitation, diet and industries. Besides this inquiries into the condition of village industries have been undertaken in many places, especially in parts of Gujarat, and C. P. where intensive survey of village industries has been done

and reports are being published. It is hoped that these inquiries and surveys will help our workers to tackle the problem of village reconstruction more effectively during the coming years.

(f) Marketing: To enable the villagers to sell their wares at the best prices the Board has been anxious to formulate a workable Marketing Scheme. For the purpose a sub-committee was formed to try in some village or group of villages any scheme they may put forward. After the experiment, if successful, the scheme can be introduced in other places.

Twenty eight shops certified by the Association are in operation in various parts of the country.

Minimum wage: As the aim is to bring about the moral and material advancement of the rural population by encouraging the revival of dead and dying industries it was desired that for all commodities produced or marketed under the aegis of the Association each workman should receive a minimum wage calculated on the basis of eight hours' efficient work, sufficient at least for his maintenance in accordance with a scientifically prescribed scale of minimum food requirements; it was laid as a duty on all connected with the Association to see that the workmen engaged in the industries promoted by them actually receive remuneration never less than the scale prescribed, always bearing in mind that as and when circumstances permit there should be a progressive rise in the scale so as to reach a standard enabling a worker's family to be properly maintained out of the earnings of its working members.

The Agents and others connected with the Association were circularised and the needed standard in the different provinces was ascertained. It has not yet been possible to work this minimum wage rule effectively so as to be able to report the result.

Training School: Arrangements are being made to provide training for village workers. A school has been started in Maganvadi for the purpose and one is being organised in the Punjab.

Village Centres: Several centres, where the members and agents are working along with others are in operation in various parts of the country. At such centres the workers have settled down in villages, identified themselves with villagers and are seeking to reconstruct village life from within. They are doing silent but effective work, their influence being calculated to affect other spheres of life, such as education, agriculture, religion and social reform, which are beyond the scope of the Association and incapable of being measured in terms of statistics. As such their work, however valuable, does not find mention here.

Financial: General donations during the year amounted to Rs. 38,254/2/3½ and Associate Subscriptions to Rs. 9,000.

In addition to this as already stated Seth Jamnalal Bajaj has given the premises occupied by the Association in Wardha with about 10 acres of garden land and pieces of cultivable field aggregating to about 20 acres.

Lt. Col. G. L. Batra transferred to the Association

his private collection of about 500 volumes and documents which forms the nucleus of its Library.

A fund of Rs. 32,614/15/- collected to raise a memorial in the form of a Museum of industries to the late Maganlal Gandhi which was in the hands of the All India Spinners' Association has since the date of this report been transferred to the Association. The Association is in consultation with Babu Surendranath Kar of Shantiniketan and Mr. Mhatre of Bombay in regard to plans for such a museum. Building materials for this costing Rs. 5,062/7/9 have also been collected.

THE ALL-INDIA HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH*

OCTOBER 1934 TO SEPTEMBER 1935.

The Harijan Sevak Sangh came into existence in October, 1932, as the result of the public meeting held at Bombay on 30th of September, 1932, soon after the termination of the historic fast of Mahatma Gandhi and the Poona Pact. Since establishment the Sangh's activities have increased considerably. As for instance, the educational expenditure for 1933-34 was Rs. 1,63,954, while in the year under report it was Rs. 2,75,420. The total welfare expenditure in the previous year was Rs. 2,04,826 while in the year under report it was Rs. 3,37,055.

Scholarships

From the very beginning it has been the policy of the Sangh to encourage the Harijans going in for higher education. During the year under review 117 higher education scholarships of an average value of Rs. 15 per month were awarded, as against only 99 last year. Preference was given to girl applicants and those going in for vocational courses. During the year seven girls got scholarships and out of 117 scholarships, 34 were for vocational courses. The total expenditure on this item incurred by the Central Board was Rs. 13,445. It should be also borne in mind that in addition to this, quite a large sum was spent by Provincial Boards on the Collegiate Scholarships, especially in big cities like Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and Poona.

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*From the Secretary, All India Harijan Sevak Sangh.

The Sangh and its various branches have also been awarding numerous scholarships for secondary education and distributed Rs. 41,245 last year. The Sangh is especially indebted to the Trustees of the Raghumal Charity Trust, Calcutta, for a monthly donation of Rs. 750 for first three months and Rs. 400 for the last nine months of the year, which was utilised in giving 112 scholarships to boys and girls in schools. A further sum of Rs. 18,261 was spent for supplying books, clothes and stationery. The total amount spent by the Centre and branches of the Sangh for all educational work amounted to Rs. 2,75,420 as compared with Rs. 1,63,945 in the preceding year.

Industrial Training.

A beginning was made in Tanning and a Central Training Tannery was started at Calcutta under the able supervision of Sjt. Satish Chandra Das-Gupta. A select batch of 21 pupils recruited from various provinces is undergoing a thorough training in chrome and bark tanning with a view to starting provincial tanneries on a cottage industry basis. It is probable that a few such tanneries will be started by the end of 1936. This year also witnessed the starting of another important scheme, that of the disposal of carcass, at Howrah. From the very beginning it has paid its way, but its real importance lies in attempting to convert a part of a great national waste into national wealth. Sjt. S. R. Valunjkar B.A. is also running a good tannery at Wardha under the immediate supervision of Gandhiji and it is probable that during the current year it will be running at full capacity so as to show a margin of

profit. The Industrial home at Kodambakam, a suburb of Madras, has various departments, viz., carpentry, smithy, cane-work, tin-smithy, and weaving. At Cuttack, Navsari and Sabarmati small schools for carpentry, *Chappal* and boot-making are going on.

Primary Schools.

The policy of the Sangh has all along been to discourage separate schools and recruit Harijan children to common schools. Fortunately this is easier now, especially in municipal areas. But our schools are mainly rural and here also separate schools are not opened where Local Board schools exist or where they are willing to admit Harijan children. But progress in villages is naturally slow and the Sangh is obliged to open special schools, which are really preparatory schools meant to be feeders of other schools. In 1935 there were 1,298 such schools with 34,273 boys and 2,816 girls. The total expenditure incurred on these schools was Rs. 1,06,438. An attempt was also made to give some systematic training to teachers employed by the Sangh. The Rajputana and Assam Sanghs have prepared short and useful courses of training teachers, for three months, which have not only increased the efficiency of our teachers, but created in them a new spirit of service which alone can be the real strength of the Sangh. This experiment is likely to be attempted by other Sanghs which have made budgetary provision for such classes.

Hostels

The year was also marked by a rapid increase in the number of free hostels and homes for students,

Their number rose soon from 60 to 92, with 1,133 boys and 148 girls. The total amount spent on hostels amounted to Rs. 62,388.

Water Supply

The solution of the water supply problem presents numerous obstacles which the Sangh has been unable to overcome fully. Apart from it, the very segregation and distance of the Harijan residents from the village proper necessitate the sinking of new wells, even where public wells exist. The persistence of untouchables, who in each village form minorities within minority, offers other difficulties to the sinking of new wells. The Sangh must confess that the opening of about 16 public wells to Harijans during the year is not an achievement, of which the Sangh or the Hindu community can be proud. A little more was done by way of sinking new wells and 347 wells were either repaired or constructed, from the Pani fund. An effort was made to replenish this fund, and appeals were issued all over the country to collect a lac of rupees for this fund. The Central Board was, however, able to collect only a sum of Rs. 14,576. But some provinces took up this matter seriously and Kathiawad, Gujrat and Sind and other provinces have collected Rs. 17,432 more between them.

Nattar

The conflict between the Nattars and Harijans in the three Talukas of Karaikudi Sub-district in the extreme south of Madras for the last few years has been exercising the workers of the Sangh. The numerous and petty, but seriously provoking, restrictions of a personal nature imposed by custom and now by force; on the Harijan are the cause of

constant and unendurable irritation. Uptil March 1935, all attempts at relaxation of such customs and reconciliation between the parties failed. As a result of Nattar obduracy, nearly 350 families have turned Christians and more may follow. Recently a party of Harijan leaders and workers consisting of D.B.V. Bashyam, toured the area on behalf of the Sangh to get into touch with the parties and persons there. It is believed since then the attitude of Nattars has undergone a welcome change and in order to secure complete results, work of a permanent nature should be started in their midst. At the recent meeting the Central Board held at Delhi on 8-2-36, it was resolved that a settlement be started in Devakottah for the solution of Nattar-Harijan problem and that certain buildings together with 50 acres of land attached thereto be purchased for a sum of Rs. 7,500. A worker has permanently been stationed in that area.

Kavitha (Gujrat)

The year on the whole was a quiet one. There were however a few unhappy incidents. At Kavitha in Ahmedabad (Gujarat) some Harijan children sought admission in that village school. This so enraged the Rajput zamindars that a social boycott of a severe nature was launched which subsequently led to cowardly assaults on Harijan residents. The village has not yet been able to make up its mind to act in the spirit of the times and at present Harijan children are compelled to study in a Christian mission school. In Radhu in Kaira district not even Harijans were allowed to shelter a Harijan teacher appointed to the local Harijan school, because he dared to attend the highest class in the common village school.

Meanwhile at the present moment an important Bill—.The Hindu Depressed Classes Civil Disabilities Removal Bill—of Rao Bahadur Rajah, is before the Assembly. The passing of that Bill into A .t and its speedy enforcement will go a great way in ameliorating the condition of Harijans. The Sangh and its various branches will try their best to mobilise public opinion in favour of the Bill and will approach the members of the Assembly to give it their support.

Finances

The total expenditure of the Sangh, both at the Centre and in all its branches, was Rs. 4,11,536. Almost the whole of it came from the fund collected by Mahatma Gandhi in his nine months' Harijan tour of November, 1933, to July, 1934. A small part was collected during the last three months of the year. The balance at the end of the year stood at Rs 5,03,332 consisting of Rs. 1,27,791 general fund and Rs. 3,75,541 of the Gandhi Purse Funds of the Provinces. Almost the whole of the Gandhi Purse Fund, which stood at over 8 lacs in July, 1934, will be spent away by the end of September, 1936.

The year has been one of a steady and satisfactory progress. But none can be more aware than the members of the Central Board of the great strides that must be made before the final object is achieved. The next year is likely to bring its own crop of problems which may necessitate a more energetic policy of the Sangh. The great Hindu community has yet to realise the peril of untouchability to Hinduism. It will be the duty of the Sangh to help to the best of its ability in introducing this great change in the Hindu Social System before it is too late.

Statement of Receipts and Disbursements from 1st April 1934 to 31st

RECEIPTS	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
To Opening Balance:		
Cash in hand		143 8 3
,, Amount received from or on behalf of the Treasurer.		
(1) Cash Received	5800 0 0	
(2) A I.C.C. Membership Subscription.	3600 0 0	
(3) Contributions from P. C. Cs.	965 0 0	
(4) Donations	62 0 0	10427 0 0
,, Sale proceeds of Congress Publications		303 6 0
,, Advance repaid or accounted for by Dr. Syed Mahmud		833 15 0
,, Nagpur Provincial Congress Committee		22 8 0
,, Amount received from Mr. M. Pratap Kurun.		5 10 0
	Total Rs.	11735 15 3

We have examined the above Statement of Receipts and Payments for the period from 1st April 1934 to 31st March 1935 with the Books and vouchers produced before us and to the best of our information and explanations given to us, we certify the same to be correct.

Bombay, 30th March 1936.

Chhotalal and Agarwal.

Registered Accountants Auditors.

March 1935, in the office of All India Congress Committee, Allahabad.

DISBURSEMENTS	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
By Salaries		5045 0 0
By Travelling expenses for staff and General Secretaries	2215 15 3	
For Working Committee Members	669 15 0	2885 14 3
By Postage and Telegrams		982 9 9
By Stationery and Printing		524 5 3
By Rents and Taxes		197 3 0
By Furniture		172 2 9
By Miscellaneous		345 10 0
By Library		28 12 0
By Advance to		
Sjt. Kripalani	52 2 6	
Sjt. Krishnadas	15 0 0	
Sjt. R. C. Pande	80 0 0	
Sjt. Narayan Iyer	8 3 9	
Peon Gangasaran	4 8 0	
Prayag Industrial Cottage, Allahabad	30 0 0	
Sjt. Chakradhar Saran	289 13 6	479 11 9
By Deposit with U. P. Electric Supply Co. Ltd.,		50 0 0
By Balance in hand:—		
Cash in office	86 14 6	
Cash in Bank	937 12 0	1024 10 6
	Total Rs.	11735 15 3

K. B. Ramakrishnaiah.	*Krishnadas.*	*J. B. Kripalani.*
Accountant	Secretary	General Secretary

Statement of Receipts and Disbursements from April 1,1935 to Dec.

RECEIPTS

	Rs.	A.	p.	Rs.	A.	P.
Opening Balance:						
Cash in hand	86	14	6			
,, in Banks	937	12	0	1024	10	6
Sale proceeds of Congress Publications				524	6	3
Amounts received from or on behalf of Treasurer						
(1) A. I. C. C. Membership Subscription	470	0	0			
(2) Contributions from P. C. Cs.	4105	0	0			
(3) A. I. C. C's. share for Purse Fund Collections during President's Tour	8044	5	1			
(4) Cash received from Treasurer	150	0	0			
(5) Donations	17	1	0			
(6) Do (Ear.marked)	14618	12	0	27405	2	1
Quetta Relief Fund				704	1	9
Interest						
(i) General	23	0	6			
(ii) Ear.marked Funds	37	12	0	60	12	6
Deposit for Membership Fee from Sjt. Poonamchand Ranka, Nagpur				1	0	0
Provident Fund				109	6	0
Advances re-paid or accounted for:						
Acharya J. B. Kripalani	52	2	6			
Sjt. Krishnadas	15	0	0			
,, Chakradhar Saran	300	0	0			
,, R. C. Pande	80	0	0			
,, Narayan Iyer	8	3	9			
Peon Ganga Saran	4	8	0			
Prayag Industrial Cottage, Allahabad	30	0	0			
Sjt. Avadesh Nandan Sahay	41	0	0			
,, Kumar Shastri	5	0	0	535	14	3
Carried over				Rs. 303[illegible]5	5	4

31, 1935 in the office of the All India Congress Committee, Allahabad

DISBURSEMENTS

	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Salaries				4437	9	4
Travelling expenses of						
(i) Working Committee Members	359	2	0			
(ii) Staff & General Secretaries	1329	9	0	1688	11	0
Stationery & Printing				1171	11	3
Rents & Taxes				253	13	6
Postage & Telegrams				1105	6	0
Library				99	7	6
Furniture				272	11	9
Miscellaneous:						
(i) General	365	6	0			
(ii) Ear-marked Funds	50	1	0	415	7	0
Repairs to Swaraj Bhawan				80	0	0
Nagpur P. C. C. being the amount recived from Nagpur Town C. C. on their behalf				22	8	0
Advance to Peasants Sub-Committee (Sjt. Purushottam Das Tandon)				100	0	0
Collection of opinions on J. P. C. Report				34	0	0
Towards Printing of Congress History				755	14	0
...Do . Do of Jubilee Brochures				733	14	0
Advance to Raja Press for Printing				435	0	0
Deposit for Telephone Trunk Calls				10	0	0
Reporting etc. charges at the A. I. C. C. Meeting held at Madras				184	0	0
Payment in Ear-marked Funds				4130	0	0
Advance to Sjt. Mohenlal Saksena for Jubilee celebrations				100	0	0
Carried over	Rs			16030	1	4

RECEIPTS

	Rs.	A.	P.
Brought forward	30365	5	4
	Rs. 30365	5	4

K. B. Ramakrishnaiah
Accountant.

Krishnadas
Office Secretary.

J. B. Kripalani
General Secretary.

DISBURSEMENTS

	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Brought forward				16030	1	4
Advances outstanding (Office Staff)						
Sjt. Abdul Wahid	60	0	0			
„ R. C. Pande	30	0	0			
Peon Ganga Saran	10	0	0	100	0	0
Closing Balance:—						
Cash in hand	398	5	10			
„ in Banks	13836	14	2	14235	4	0
				Rs. 30365	5	4

We have examined the above Statement of accounts with the books and vouchers produced before us and to the best of our informnation and explanations given to us, we certify the accounts as correct.

R. C. Mehta & Co
27th March 1936. Auditors

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